

March 30, 2005

MEMORANDUM FOR: AIS Observers

FROM: David C. Potter
Branch Chief, FSB

SUBJECT: New Species Weight Tally Sheets and FAQ's

This memo is to notify you that new versions of the Species Weight Tally Sheets are now available (dated 03/05) and copies are enclosed. This includes the Species Weight Tally Sheets for Regular B-DAS Pilot Program Trips (program code 150), U.S. / Canada Area Trips (program code 130), and Closed Area Scallop Trips (excluding Hudson Canyon) (program codes 201-203). Please use these new tally sheets immediately - they are also available on line at:

<http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/femad/fsb/>

Also, please note that the conversion factor for white hake has been updated to be 1.34. Below are some frequently asked questions (FAQ's) that will hopefully clarify some of the issues related to the tally sheets and lead to more accurate reporting of weights. Thank you for your continued attention to these details.

Q: Which fisheries require a Species Weight Tally Sheet?

A: The Tally Sheets are required for fisheries that have a real-time quota monitoring system and currently include the Closed Area Scallop (excluding Hudson Canyon), U.S. / Canada Management Area, and Regular B-DAS Pilot Program trips.

Q: Do I have to call in my Species Weight Tally information with my Obscon trip information?

A: No, it is no longer a requirement to call in the Species Weight Tally information, but the tally sheets

must be submitted with the trip and sent in as soon as possible.

Q: ***What is a "program code"?***

A: The "program code" is an integral part of identifying the type of trip that you observed. It is critical to the analysts as it identifies the type of sampling or fishing that occurred which may introduce a bias in their regular analyses. This means that data-users may choose to treat the trips with a certain program code separately from other trips. Biases may be introduced by the method of vessel selection, management regulations that have very specific limitations, or differing observer sampling protocols. Program codes indicate if trips were training trips, if they occurred in closed areas or special access areas, or if they involved experimental gear, or special sampling equipment. Program codes also help the editors determine which trips should be processed as a priority and if there are "special" data forms associated with the trips, such as Tally Sheets or Pinger Tester Sheets. In the database, the program code becomes a fixed part of the trip identifier that links all of the associated trip information. The "program code" should be reported with your Obscon trip information.

Q: ***Was "program code" covered in training? And why?***

A: It was not covered in past trainings, but it will be in the future. There has been a recent increase in the need to assign program codes (mainly due to new fishing regulations affecting observer reporting requirements). In the past, it was manageable for the NMFS or AIS staff to review the trip logs and identify the proper program code. They would then record it on the Vessel and Trip Information Log under "Project Name" (which is in the "In-Office" box in the upper right of the log) and include it in the Obscon database. Now, it is not always obvious to those reviewing the logs which program code would be appropriate, and we must ask the observer to call it in when they report their Obscon. You do not have to fill in the "Project Name", but for clarity, it is suggested that you write the program code in the Comments Section of the Vessel and Trip Information Log. Sometimes a trip may fall under multiple program codes, and the NMFS staff must decide the relative

importance of the codes, which may also change over time. It is complicated and to cover this topic in the initial observer training seemed unwise.

Q: ***Which program codes should I know?***

A: There are many program codes, and some are out of date as they apply to fisheries that we no longer cover or fishing methods that have changed. Also, we regularly have to add program codes as certain information becomes a necessity to the data-users and as fishery regulations are developed. These are some of the program codes that are currently used that observers should be able to report in Obscon and in the comments section of the Vessel and Trip Information Log:

- 010 Training Trip
- 101 Pinger Tester Trip
- 102 Scallop Trip with Chain Material for
Excluding Turtles
- 130 U.S. / Canada Management Area Trip
- 140 Haddock Hook Special Access Program Closed
Area I Trip
- 150 Regular B-DAS Pilot Program Trip
- 201 Closed Area Scallop, Nantucket Lightship
Closed Area Trip
- 202 Closed Area Scallop, Closed Area I Trip
- 203 Closed Area Scallop, Closed Area II Trip
- 204 Closed Area Scallop, Hudson Canyon Trip

Q: ***What are the conversion factors for dressed to round weights for the species I must report?***

A: All quota monitoring must be reported on the Tally Sheets in round weights (except scallops). You use the conversion factors by multiplying the dressed weights by some factor to get an estimate of what that fish would weigh as a round weight (or live weight). It may be obvious - a round weight should always be more than the dressed weight. *For example, if I have 1 pound of dressed cod, it is estimated that the round weight of that cod would have been 1.17 pounds.* The conversion factors are listed on your Tally Sheets as:

Cod = 1.17

Haddock = 1.14

White Hake = 1.34

(* Please note this has recently been updated*)

- Q: ***What if I usually record dressed weights on my Haul Logs?***
- A: Your information on the Haul Log should remain the same as usual - dressed weights are fine there. Only the Tally Sheets would show your calculations on converting to a round weight.
- Q: ***Do I have to add up the weights on the Tally Sheets?***
- A: Yes, you should add up the columns on each page and record it under "Subtotal For Page". Then, on the last page, you should add up all the subtotals from each page and record the grand total under "Total For Trip".
- Q: ***How do I know what kind of trip the vessel is going to do?***
- A: Ask the captain. In order for the vessel to participate in the majority of the special groundfish fisheries, the vessel must call the observer program 72 hours in advance of the trip. Fifty percent of the trips get an observer assigned and 50% of the trips get a waiver. But the trips don't always go when they intended and the captain may change their plans by the time you get on the boat. The Area Coordinator will tell you what the vessel initially called in for which sometimes changes. The vessels also must have a Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) and declare into the fishery prior to leaving port. You should ask the captain at the beginning of the trip what fishery they declared into and what kind of days they are intending to use (i.e. A-Days, Regular-B-Days, or Reserve-B-Days).
- Q: ***What if the vessel is using B-Days AND going into the U.S. / Canada Area?***
- A: Currently, the only way to use Regular B-Days is to do a Regular B-DAS Pilot Program Trip. These trips are considered Regular B-DAS Pilot Program Trips, regardless of where they fish, and would have a program code of 150. If/when other Special Access Areas open inside the U.S. / Canada Area allowing Regular B-Days, this may no longer be so clear cut and you will be advised when this happens.
- Q: ***On a U.S. / Canada Management Area trip (130), what do I do with hauls made outside the area?***
- A: Only observed hauls INSIDE the U.S. / Canada Management Area should be counted in the species

weight tallies. For this reason, during these trips, please pay close attention to where you are fishing or confirm with the captain that the tow occurred in the U.S. / Canada area at some point. If any of the tow went into the area, the entire tow is included. We have provided you with new statistical area and closed area maps that will help to better identify your location.

Q: ***What if they declared into a U.S. / Canada Management Area and did not end up doing any tows there?***

A: If the vessel declared into a U.S. / Canada Management Area (and is not using Regular B-DAS), the program code is still 130. You should submit a U.S. / Canada Area Tally Sheet, but every haul would have zeros in the species columns.

Q: ***What if a Regular B-DAS Pilot Program trip (150) ends up using A-DAS?***

A: It may happen that a trip, that had declared into the "Regular B-DAS Pilot Program" and intended on using Regular B-DAS, ends up "flipping" to A-DAS. A vessel must flip to using A-DAS if they exceed certain catch limits of regulated species. When they flip, the entire trip is flipped to A-DAS, but this does not change the fishery into which they initially declared. You would NOT change your program code of 150, even if a Regular B-DAS Pilot Program trip flips to A-DAS.

Q: ***What do I do with unobserved hauls?***

A: Since ultimately, it is the ratio of kept to discard that is evaluated, it would be biased to include unobserved hauls (as there is no discard information) in the tally. Therefore, only species weights from OBSERVED hauls should be included. Record the haul numbers consecutively in the "Haul Number" column, and for unobserved hauls write "UNOBSERVED" across the row, without recording any species weights.

Q: ***When I report my Obscon, do I really have to report the statistical area accurately?***

A: It is critical that the statistical area be reported accurately with your Obscon trip information. It should be the area where most of the tows occurred. Especially in fisheries where a quota is being monitored by statistical area, we do not want to be applying catch totals to the wrong area. Statistical

area is a very important field to get right. Coverage maps are now being provided on our website to show where observer coverage occurred - and this is done by statistical area.

Q: *Why is Obscon so important?*

A: Obscon represents the real-time activity of the Observer Program. It takes months to process the detailed information from the trip logs as it is edited, coded, entered, audited, and finally loaded into an Oracle database. Some fishery-related decisions can not wait that long, so Obscon serves as a preview and can be used to assess in-season adjustments of coverage levels, fisheries covered, or quota allocations. Obscon data may be used to support or dismiss requests for emergency closures or allow additional access to closed areas. It is extremely important that Obscon information be reported accurately and in a timely fashion. The data are immediately incorporated into monitoring fishery quotas, incidental take levels, contractor performance, and budgeting. Obscon summaries are posted on our website which is referenced by organizations and the program is criticized when the information is not kept current. Small errors like omitting the port landed or gear code, or getting a digit wrong in the hull number is debilitating to the entire flow of information and ultimately affects the overall success of the program.

Please contact Amy Van Atten if you have other questions or concerns, at 508-495-2266 or by email at Amy.Van.Atten@noaa.gov.

Enclosures:

Regular B-DAS Pilot Program Trip Species Weight Tally Sheet
U.S. / Canada Area Trip Species Weight Tally Sheet
Closed Area Scallop Trip Species Weight Tally Sheet

NMFS FISHERIES OBSERVER PROGRAM

U.S. / CANADA AREA TRIPS (PROGRAM CODE 130)

SPECIES WEIGHT TALLY SHEET

OBS/TRIP ID	
DATE LANDED mm/yy	/
PAGE #	of

INCLUDE OBSERVED HAULS IN U.S./CANADA AREA ONLY. SUBMIT TALLY SHEETS WITH TRIP.

HAUL NUMBER	COD KEPT	COD DISCARD	HADDOCK KEPT	HADDOCK DISCARD	YELLOWTAIL KEPT	YELLOWTAIL DISCARD
SUBTOTAL FOR PAGE						
TOTAL FOR TRIP (ON LAST PAGE ONLY)						

Dressed weights recorded on the Haul Log MUST be converted to round weights on this Tally Sheet. **For cod, multiply the dressed weight by 1.17. For haddock, multiply the dressed weight by 1.14.** PLEASE SHOW YOUR WORK ON THIS SHEET (REFER TO THE EXAMPLE BELOW).

1	$50 * 1.17 = 58.5$	0	$1000 * 1.14 = 1140$	75	0	0
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This example shows Haul 1, 50 lbs. of dressed kept cod, 0 lbs. of discarded cod, 1000 lbs. of kept dressed haddock, 75 lbs. of discarded round haddock, 0 lbs. of kept yellowtail and 0 lbs. of discarded yellowtail.

NMFS FISHERIES OBSERVER PROGRAM
CLOSED AREA SCALLOP TRIPS (PROGRAM CODES 201-203)
SPECIES WEIGHT TALLY SHEET

OBS/TRIP ID	
DATE LANDED mm/yy	/
PAGE #	of

INCLUDE OBSERVED HAULS ONLY. SUBMIT TALLY SHEETS WITH TRIP.				
HAUL NUMBER	SCALLOP MEATS KEPT	YELLOWTAIL KEPT	YELLOWTAIL DISCARD	NOTES
SUBTOTAL FOR PAGE				
TOTAL FOR TRIP (ON LAST PAGE ONLY)				